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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New Milestone Reached in Channel Islands Bald Eagle Recovery *Live Eaglet Banding Via Webcam*

Today eagle enthusiasts will watch as biologists band and tag two bald eagle chicks that will soon leave their Pelican Harbor nest on Santa Cruz Island, off the coast of southern California.

On neighboring Santa Rosa Island, a milestone is reached as two bald eagle chicks have hatched in nests on that island for the first time in over 60 years. A record number of successful bald eagle nests is being celebrated this breeding season on the Channel Islands.

There are six bald eagle chicks expected to fledge, or leave the nest, in the next few weeks on the northern Channel Islands. They will bring the number of bald eagles on northern islands to about 40 birds.

During today's live event biologists will band the birds, attach wing tags and radio and satellite transmitters, and conduct health checks. Hundreds of eagle fans are expected to watch the event live via the *Channel Islands Live Bald Eagle Webcam* at:
<http://www.nps.gov/chis/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-webcam.htm>.

The 2010 breeding season resulted in four nests and four chicks on Santa Cruz Island, two nests each with one chick on Santa Rosa Island, and seven nests with nine chicks on Santa Catalina Island (part of the southern Channel Islands).

"We are cautiously optimistic about this trend of bald eagle recovery as the chemicals that contributed to their decline persist in the southern California marine ecosystem," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Annie Little. "We hope for a self-sustaining population and a return to historic levels of bald eagle nests on the northern Channel Islands."

"Southern Californians can be proud to know that just in this past decade they are seeing recovery of bald eagles to nearly half the historic population on the Channel Islands

following their significant decline in the 1960s,” said Russell Galipeau, Superintendent of Channel Islands National Park.

History of Recovery

In 2006, the Pelican Harbor bald eagle pair made headlines when their chick (A-49) hatched on Santa Cruz Island. It was the first bald eagle chick to hatch on the Channel Islands unaided by humans in over 50 years. A-49, now a four-year-old, was seen in courtship behavior this season on Santa Cruz Island.

Prior to 2006, the last known successful nesting of a bald eagle on the northern Channel Islands was in 1950 on Santa Rosa Island. Bald eagles disappeared from the Channel Islands by the early 1960s, due to human impacts, primarily DDT and PCB contamination. The effects of these chemicals are magnified in the food chain, causing bald eagles to lay thin-shelled eggs that either dehydrate or break in the nest.

A Partnership for Bald Eagle Recovery

Bald eagle restoration efforts on the Channel Islands are funded by the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), a multi-agency program funded by court settlements and dedicated to restoring natural resources harmed by DDTs and PCBs released into the environment by Montrose Chemical Corporation and other industrial sources in southern California in the mid 20th century. Further information on MSRP can be found at: www.montroserestoration.gov.

The National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, co-owners of Santa Cruz Island, continue to partner to protect and restore the island ecosystem. The Pelican Harbor nest is on The Nature Conservancy property. For more information visit: www.nature.org/eagles.

The Institute for Wildlife Studies, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife species, has conducted bald eagle restoration on the Channel Islands for over 25 years, including efforts on the northern islands within Channel Islands National Park. For links to webcams on Catalina Island visit: www.iws.org.

Using Technology to Share Success

The Bald Eagle Webcam is one of a number of educational opportunities offered as part of *Channel Islands Live*, a cooperative partnership between Channel Islands National Park and Ventura County Office of Education. Through *Channel Islands Live* students and the public have been able to watch the eagles in real time over the Internet. Teachers use this experience to guide student learning according to state-adopted science standards. The Bald Eagle Webcam and associated discussion board funded by MSRP can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/chis/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-webcam.htm>

For media visit: <http://www.nps.gov/chis/photosmultimedia/bald-eagle-archives.htm>